

COMMUNITY SUPPORT NETWORK NEWS



A PUBLICATION OF THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
COMMUNITY SUPPORT NETWORK

SUMMER 2009

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COMMUNICATION EXPANDED:

THE GIFT OF SPEECH THROUGH AUGMENTATIVE AND ALTERNATIVE COMMUNICATION

Many individuals diagnosed with autism are unable to verbally express feelings, thoughts and needs. Their struggle to communicate even the most basic needs through gestures, facial expressions and body language can be frustrating and frightening to these individuals and their families. The inability to communicate effectively often presents a barrier to learning and literacy and creates significant obstacles to social and emotional development and independence.

Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC), also frequently called Speech Generating Devices (SGDs) or Voice Output Communication Aids (VOCAs), are devices that can provide a bridge from a life where thoughts, feelings and needs are held in silence, to a life where interaction, expression and learning are possible.

The Foundation for Autism Support and Training (FAST) 301-260-2777 recently opened the AAC Showroom and Demonstration Center in Silver Spring, Md., the first of its kind in Montgomery County. At no charge and by appointment, any person with autism in Maryland, or any family member of a person with autism may set up an appointment to try out, learn about and play with a full range of leading Speech Generating Devices in a relaxed setting. Trained staff will be available to demonstrate devices, answer questions, and provide AAC information. For more information contact FAST at 301-260-2777.

Benefits of Speech Generated Devices:

- ◆ Clarifies vocalizations, gestures, body language, etc.
- ◆ Expands the language of limited speakers by increasing their vocabulary to include verbs, descriptors, exclamatory comments, etc.
- ◆ Provides speech for people who are nonverbal

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

JULY 2009



July 1 & 21: Jewish Social Service Agency's Monthly Family Support Groups

In these free ongoing monthly groups, parents and family members of children with disabilities share their joys and sorrows, hopes and fears, coping mechanisms and strategies for living for today and planning for the future. Pre-registration required. Contact JSSA for more information at 301-610-8357.

July 7: Jewish Social Service Agency's Support Group for Parents of Children with Asperger's, Autism, PDD-NOS

This free group allows parents to share coping strategies and community resources, develop networks, and gain support. For more information and to register contact JSSA at 301-610-8361.

July 8: Army Exceptional Family Member Program Support Group

This program is open to everyone, not just Exceptional Family Member Program members. The Army Exceptional Family Member Program assists military families to ensure that Exceptional Family Members receive comprehensive, coordinated special needs services through the military and/or civilian community. This group meets the second Wednesday of each month at McGill Training Center, 8425 Zimborski Ave., Fort Meade, MD. For more information contact Valerie Stanislaus, 301-677-4122.

July 9 – 30: Seminar on Family Anger Issues

Topics will include Parent-child issues (i.e., power struggles and emotional outbursts), Child-child issues (i.e., sibling rivalry, dealing with conflicts, looking for patterns and creating strategies for change; prevention strategies). Four session evening class aimed at helping parents to understand their own and their family members' intense feelings. **Cost: \$50 (\$30 class fee, \$20 book fee)** United Church of Christ, 9525 Colesville Rd., Silver Spring. Sponsored by the YMCA Bethesda Youth & Family Services, For additional registration information contact Pam Mintz 301-229-1347, parenting@ymcadc.org.

July 9: Statewide Webinar: Advocacy Strategies for Parents

This month's presenter, Cindy Hottinger from Maryland Coalition of Families for Children's Mental Health will discuss how to learn to organize your child's documentation and records. The goal is for parents to have a better understanding of their child's disability, strengths and needs at home, school and in the community. These monthly web-based workshops allow family members to see and hear presentations on their computers at home or work. Workshops are held during lunchtime from 12noon to 1 p.m. Registration is limited to 20 for each workshop. Pre-registration is required. Telephone conference call is also available. For more information or to register, contact callenza@mdcoalition.org or by phone, 410-730-8267.

July 22-Aug. 12: Parent Training Workshop

This psycho-educational parent training program is for parents of children with autism spectrum disorders in elementary and/or middle school. Clinicians teach parents strategies for coaching their children on improving social skills. Parents learn strategies including: assessing the child's needs, developing positive thinking about friendships, direct teaching, social problem-solving, teaching life lessons, demonstrating empathy, reinforcing positive social skill displays and role playing. **Cost: \$30/session in advance and \$35/session at the door.** Sponsored by Jewish Social Service Agency. For more information and to register call 301-610-8361.

AUGUST 2009



Aug. 4 – 5: *High School Inclusion & Transition Planning*

Two day summer institute about inclusive education practices for high school students with developmental disabilities and transition planning. Conference is for transition coordinators, HS special education teachers, students with disabilities, parents, and administrative staff. Cost is \$200.00 . A limited number of scholarships for students & parents are available. For more information or to register visit: www.mcie.org or call 410-859-5400.

Aug. 5 & 18: *Jewish Social Service Agency's Monthly Family Support Groups*

In these free ongoing monthly groups, parents and family members of children with disabilities share their joys and sorrows, hopes and fears, coping mechanisms and strategies for living for today and planning for the future. Pre-registration required. Contact JSSA for more information at 301-610-8357.

August 13: *Statewide Webinar: Advocacy Strategies for Parents*

This month's presenter, Deb Gordon, an IEP Specialist from Maryland Coalition of Families for Children's Mental Health will discuss the importance of advocacy and how parents can become the best advocate for their child at home and in school. This monthly web-based workshop will allow family members to see and hear presentations on their computers at home or work. Workshops are held during lunchtime from 12noon to 1 p.m. Registration is limited to 20 for each workshop. Pre-registration is required. Telephone conference call is also available. For more information or to register, contact callenza@mdcoalition.org or by phone, 410-730-8267.

Aug. 29: *Montgomery County Public School's 2nd Annual Back-To-School Fair*

For more information contact Carver Educational Services Center, 850 Hungerford Dr., Rockville, Md. This event is sponsored by the Office of Communications and Family Outreach, <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/familycommunity/>

SEPTEMBER 2009



Sept. 24: *Monthly MCPS Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting (SEAC)*

Meetings are open to the public. Open forum takes places between 7:00-7:30 PM. Speaker begins at 7:30-9:30 PM. Carver Educational Services Center, 850 Hungerford Dr., Rm. TBD, Rockville. For more information contact Anne Turner, adturn88@verizon.net or Leslie Brents, brentswatts@earthlink.net.

Weekend Nature Programs: Saturdays & Sundays

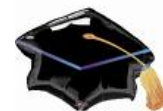
Presented by Discovery Creek Children's Museum

Located at Glen Echo Creek at Old Stables building, near the park entrance

Admission is free for members and children under 2, \$5 for nonmembers

For more information call 202-488-0627 or visit: <http://www.discoverycreek.org>

TIPS FOR TRANSITIONING YOUTH



Transitioning Youth (TY) are students finishing high school (usually around age 21) about to transition into Adult Services funded through the Developmental Disabilities Administration. Local Agencies provide Supported Employment, Traditional Day or Medical Day programming depending on the level of care or supervision each individual needs. Integral to this process is the Transitioning Student Teacher (TST) at your local high school working in conjunction with the MCDHHS TY team. The MCDHHS TY team includes Shawn Lattanzio, Erika Regnier and Shayna Street. About one year prior to the completion of high school, students and their families work intensively with this team. The following are some steps the family should complete prior to exiting high school.

- ◆ Complete the DDA application, keep a copy of the eligibility determination letter
- ◆ Apply for SSI
- ◆ Apply for Metro Access
- ◆ Apply to DORS – Division of Rehabilitation Services
- ◆ Visit at least three Adult Service Programs – set up work trials with each
- ◆ Look for your Choice letter in the mail – submit choices in order of preference for Adult Service Program (rate them first to third)
- ◆ Mail choice letters to: Dept. of Health & Human Services, Aging and Disability Services, Attn: Transition Team, 11 N. Washington Street, Suite 450, Rockville, MD 20850

Next, the provider submits budgets to DDA and then you will be notified by DDA of the anticipated start dates in the Adult Service program. For more assistance contact Community Support Network, 240-777-1216.



KEYS TO UNDERSTANDING GUARDIANSHIP

The *Handbook of Guardianship*, written by Joan L. O'Sullivan, is a guide to understanding the issue of adult guardianship and discusses the laws and factors related to a family choosing to pursue guardianship of a loved one. Sections include the definition of *guardianship* and understanding *competency*, the measure of a loved one's ability to care and make decisions for themselves. Alternatives to guardianship are also provided.

This handbook addresses specific questions that families have when faced with the potential of pursuing guardianship for a loved one. To access this resource visit:
<http://www.mdoa.state.md.us/documents/Guardian.htm/>

VA AID AND ATTENDANCE PROGRAM

Veterans and their spouses or surviving spouses can receive up to \$22,000 per year to pay for help at home, an assisted living facility, nursing home, or other senior housing. This improved pension is paid to you TAX FREE!!

The VA Aid and Attendance program is designed to provide monetary assistance to those veterans who served our country during a time of war and are now in need of aid or assistance with activities of daily living. This aid or assistance can be provided at home, in an assisted living facility, or a nursing home and can be provided by friends, family, or healthcare professionals.

If you are a veteran and need help with such daily activities as cooking, cleaning, dressing, driving, mobility, or other assistance, this benefit can provide the funds you need to pay for help. To learn more call 877-752-0055 or visit: <http://www.vaaidandattendance.com/>



MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF DISABILITIES' EMPLOYED INDIVIDUALS PROGRAM

Individuals who work and have a significant disability may qualify for the Employed Individuals with Disabilities program, which extends Medical Assistance health benefits to residents of the State of Maryland. The program is designed to provide individuals with disabilities the choice of being able to work while receiving health benefits through Medical Assistance. This program is income based and requires determination of the disability. For additional information on eligibility criteria or applying for the EID program, please call 443-514-5034/1-800-637-4113 or email Michael Dalto at mdalto@mdod.state.md.us.

PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION FOR DISABLED VETERANS

A property tax exemption is available to the following individuals, for their primary residence located in the State of Maryland:

- ♦ Veterans who are 100 percent disabled for service-connected causes. The exemption passes to the veteran's spouse upon his or her death.
- ♦ Surviving spouse of active duty military personnel who died in the line of duty.
- ♦ Surviving spouse of a totally disabled veteran.
- ♦ A spouse who receives the dependency and indemnity compensation.

Use the links below to download the appropriate form, or contact your county's tax assessor's office or 1-888-246-5941, visit: <http://www.mdva.state.md.us/tax.html>



TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION RESOURCE

The Society for Technical Communication (STC) Access Ability SIG Web site aims to provide resources, information, and support to technical communicators with accessibility needs and to help technical communicators make the products they create accessible to end users with accessibility needs.

The mission of the Access Ability SIG is threefold: (1) provide resources, information, and support to technical communicators with disabilities; (2) provide resources that will help technical communicators make the products they create accessible to end users with disabilities; (3) provide strategic leadership in both areas through positive initiatives and open communication, both inside and outside the Society. For further information regarding the STC-SIG please visit <http://www.stcsig.org/sn/index.shtml>

RESPIRE CARE FOR NAVY FAMILIES

The Navy Exceptional Families MP program provides up to 40 hours of respite care per month for families with children with special needs. Respite care can be used for time to run errands, exercise or just rest.

To qualify for EFMP's Respite Care, children must be between the ages of birth to 18 years old and families must enroll in the Navy's EFMP. To begin the process, interested individuals should call, Child Care Aware at 1-800-424-2246. Visit the National Association for Childcare Resources and Referral Agencies: <http://www.naccrra.org/MilitaryPrograms/NavyEFMP/#5>

TWICE EXCEPTIONAL: CSN CLIENT SPOTLIGHT

CHAD VAUGHN



Chad likes making movies with his best friend Jason. They create clay creatures out of model magic. Then Chad and his friend create detailed stories and bring to life their models through video. These young men funnel their creative talents into creating short films involving action, superheroes and dinosaurs. Chad is able to utilize his computer to add sound effects and voice work to the films. Some themes include time traveling and stopping villains from world domination. Chad and Jason write scripts separately, but come together to make their visions come to life on film. Chad is a former Rock Terrace student who thrives in many art forms and is an accomplished painter in addition to his skill in creating models.

Submitted by: Stacey Clarit

IP MEETING PREPARATION

Individual Planning (IP) Preparation involves the development of short and long term goals for the individual. Team members should be prepared to discuss the following:

- a. Individual's interests and strengths (work/recreation)
- b. Supports that are needed for the individual
- c. Names and contact information for important natural supports
- d. Identify the individual's dislikes
- e. Responsibilities of different team members
- f. Determine if a behavior plan is needed
- g. Most recent annual physical/dental information.

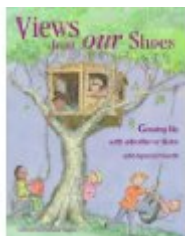
Preparing this type of information will permit the individual and their team members to be ready to discuss ways for the individuals to live meaningful lives with opportunities for community integration as desired.

SUMMER READING LIST

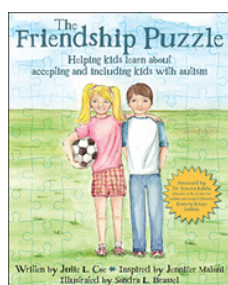


Views From Our Shoes

By: Donald J. Meyer and Cary Pillo



"I can't imagine having a plain old sister," writes ten-year-old Ryan Clearwater. He is one of 45 siblings in *Views from Our Shoes* who share their experience as the brother or sister of someone with a disability. The kids whose essays are featured range in age from four to eighteen and are the siblings of youngsters with a variety of special needs including autism, cerebral palsy, developmental delays, chronic health conditions, attention deficit disorder, hydrocephalus, visual and hearing impairments, Down syndrome, Prader-Willi and Tourette's syndrome. Their personal tales introduce young siblings to others like them, perhaps for the first time, and allow them to compare experiences. A glossary of disabilities provides easy-to-understand definitions of many of the conditions covered.



Friendship Puzzle: Helping Kids Learn About Accepting and Including Kids

With Autism

By: Julie Coe

Coe and her husband self-published the book so children, parents and teachers would have a tool to use in discussing autism. Written for children, age 5 and older, the book is about Mackenzie's quest to befriend her autistic classmate Dylan. "The Friendship Puzzle: Helping kids learn about accepting and including kids with autism" can be purchased online at www.friendshippuzzle.com and at major online booksellers.

Uncommon Fathers: Reflections of Raising a Child with a Disability

Edited By: Donald Myer, Director of the Sibling Project

Uncommon Fathers is a compelling collection of essays by fathers who were asked to reflect and write about the life-altering experience of having a child with a disability. Nineteen fathers have taken an introspective and honest look at this deeply emotional subject, offering a seldom-heard perspective on raising a child with special needs.

SIBPARENT: A LISTSERV JUST FOR PARENTS

SibParent is a place where parents of kids with special needs can talk about their "other" kids. On the Internet, there are hundreds of listservs where parents can talk about their kids who have special needs. But there is only one listserv where parents can go to talk about their "other" kids!



SibParent, sponsored by the Sibling Support Project, is a new, innovative listserv where parents can discuss the joys and concerns experienced by their typically developing children. *SibParent* is hosted by Andrea Congdon, a mom of children with and without special needs. To join *SibParent* go to: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SibParent/join>

MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
COMMUNITY SUPPORT NETWORK
11 N. WASHINGTON STREET, SUITE 450
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20850

SAVE THE DATE

PERSPECTIVES ON AUTISM

PRESENTED BY FAMILIES TOGETHER FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

OCTOBER 15-16, 2009

MANOR COUNTRY CLUB, ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND AND FALL WEBINARS AT YOUR COMPUTER!

Speakers Include:



Eustacia Cutler



Thomas Powell, PH.D



Sally Burton-Hoyle

Other speakers: Barry and Renee Gordon, Sally Burton-Hoyle, Robin Moore, Ann Lee

For more information or to register visit www.familiestogether.org
